

THE CHRONICLE

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Volume 46, Number 6

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

THURSDAY, October 10, 2019

Gospel Fest provides something for everyone

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

The first day of the 2019 Gospel Fest at the Dixie Classic Fair brought together a great collection of talent that people of all ages could enjoy. The six acts that performed on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 6, had the crowd going from start to finish.

The St. Paul United Methodist Church Mass Choir was first up to the stage. The traditional contemporary choir has performed at Gospel Fest multiple times and they did what they always do - performed well. Their set was filled with melodic harmonies that brought you back to your childhood growing up in the church.

The dance group Radical Reverence was next up. The group is comprised of Daniel Shegog, Jeremiah Tillery, Taylor Ellerbe, Gabrielle Caesar and Kenae McMillan and all are members of St. Paul United Methodist as well.

"Dance comes in many forms, so we try to bring it, whether it's slow or fast, and we just try and bring it together," said Caesar.

The group has been performing together for a while and say they are used to performing in front of large crowds, so there were no nerves.

"We danced here last year and we go to churches that put us in front of crowds that we don't know, so I wouldn't say we had any nerves, it just comes natural to us," said Tillery.

Vocalist Alfred Clemonts was a big hit on Sunday as well. His mixture of gospel and R&B had many people saying, "Man he can really sing!"

"I don't look at it more so as performing, but I look at it as a chance to minister and a chance to share with others what I am sharing with God at the same time," said Clemonts. "When people say you've done a good job, I always say, 'To God be the glory,' because it's me giving God the glory for giving me the gift to share with other people."

Clemonts says the integration of R&B to his gospel music was intentional. He likes to incorporate different genres of music into his style of gospel, so he doesn't get pigeonholed as one style of singer.

Possibly the biggest response from the crowd was toward Todd Curry & TLC. Their upbeat choir-style performance was a big hit for the audience. Almost everyone in the crowd was either bobbing their heads or clapping their hands during the performance.



Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr.

Shekina Mitchell with Willie Mason and Friends gospel group performs during Gospel Fest at the fairgrounds Sunday, Oct. 6.

"I have been in the industry for a long time and being a pastor now, I've learned it's more about the ministry aspect," said Curry. "I'm excited that this new choir we just formed and for them to get the concept that it's bigger than me and it's about touching people's lives, touches me more than anything."

"We have ex-drug dealers, people who have been on drugs, and people who have literally been healed from cancer. All of this was up here singing and when they sing, it's from the heart, so it's not a game."

Curry incorporated a go-go style beat into his performance. Go-go

music is a popular style of music in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. Curry says he used the beat to "capture everyone."

Closing out Sunday's performances was Willie Mason and Friends. A well-known group in the community, they charmed the crowd with their powerful vocals and testimonies through song. Willie Mason and Friends are scheduled to go on tour later this month.

Rasheed Davis was present for the event Sunday afternoon. This was his first time actually stopping

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Special Blessing of the Animals held for police, sheriff K-9 units

BY JUDIE HOLCOMB-PACK
THE CHRONICLE

About a dozen members of St. Anne's Episcopal Church watched as Rev. Ginny Wilder blessed three four-legged members of local law enforcement.

John Lockwood, who heads up the church's Fuzzy Friends outreach ministry, said, "This is the first time we have invited the K-9 units. We felt they needed prayers ... and this would be a good time to bring the community together to do this."

St. Anne's has held a Blessing of the Animals for nearly 20 years, but being a relatively new rector to St. Anne's, this was only Rev. Wilder's third time and the first for K-9' members. She said, "Having three dogs myself, I know our dogs and our pets see us on our good days and our bad days, but they are always there for us. ... This is our opportunity to thank them through the language of love."

The Blessing of the Animals is a service held throughout the world on or around Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. Any animal, from the usual dogs and cats, to birds, reptiles, chickens, horses, llamas, or other animals, can be blessed on this occasion. A Blessing of the Animals for parish members' and neighbors' pets was held that afternoon at 4 p.m.

K-9 members receiving blessings were Bane, a German Shepherd, with his partner, Dep. Ryan Rae, and Suzie, with his partner, Dep. Troy Curry, both from the Forsyth County Sheriff's Dept., and Copper, along with his partner, Corp. Gary Neal, from the Winston-Salem Police Dept. Rae mentioned that all the dogs were about three years old and were trained to detect narcotics,



Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr.

Lucia Wilkinson pets Bane, a K-9 member of the Forsyth County Sheriff's Dept. while his partner Dep. Ryan Rae watches.

search and apprehension, and tracking.

Rae said he bonded immediately when he received Bane, who is from Czechoslovakia. "From the first day I met him, he has listened to everything I've said." Bane lives with Rae and is considered a part of his family. All K-9 members live with their partners, but are kept separate from their other pets. Neal said he has six other dogs as well and most get along well with each other.

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Board of Elections approves WSSU as early voting site

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

After being left off the list of early voting sites for nearly a decade, earlier this week the Forsyth County Board of Elections unanimously approved Winston-Salem State University as an early voting site for the 2020

Election.

WSSU was one of the 11 early voting sites in Forsyth County until 2013, when Ken Raymond became chair of the Board of Elections. A Republican who now serves on the N.C. State Board of Elections, Raymond alleged that in 2010 there was an election violation at WSSU involving a professor.

According to Raymond, who was a poll worker at the time, a professor who was never named was giving students course credits for voting at the early voting place on campus. Although the allegations made by Raymond were never confirmed, the students at WSSU have been suffering ever since.

Because there hasn't

been an early voting station on campus for nearly a decade, students have been forced to find transportation to other locations across the county, while others didn't cast a ballot at all.

As sort of a compromise, for the past few years the W.R. Anderson Recreation Center has been added as

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